

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090712

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO MOSCOW TAIPEI TOKYO
HONG KONG PEKING CINCPAC FROM SEOUL 18 APR 75:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2689

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, KN, KS

SUBJECT: ROK REACTION TO KIM IL-SUNG PEKING VISIT

REF: PEKING 716

1. ROK IS FOLLOWING VISIT BY KIM IL-SUNG TO PEKING
WITH INTEREST AND APPREHENSION. ALTHOUGH THERE IS MUCH
DISCUSSION AS TO VISIT'S MEANING, SOUTH KOREANS REMAIN
UNCERTAIN AS TO ITS PURPOSE AND ITS PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES
FOR ROK.

2. PRESS IS PRINTING WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS OF
KIM'S TRIP. EDITORIAL REACTION THUS FAR HAS GENERALLY
FOLLOWED LEAD OF PRESIDENT PARK, WHO COMMENTED ON LEARNING
OF TRIP THAT "NO ONE CAN TELL WHAT THE NORTH KOREAN
COMMUNIST HEAD WILL DO IN PEKING. BUT WE SHOULD
REMEMBER THAT KIM VISITED STALIN AND PURCHASED
WAR WEAPONS FROM THE USSR SHORTLY BEFORE THE KOREAN
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WAR."

3. GOVERNMENT SEOUL SHINMUN SPECULATED THAT KIM WILL ASK PRC TO STEP UP ITS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO GET US TROOPS OUT OF ROK. PAPER ALSO SAID IT MUST BE ASSUMED KIM'S BUSINESS IN PEKING IS IMPORTANT, SINCE HD LOULD HAVE KNOWN EFFECT HIS TRIP WILL HAVE ON USSR. GOVERNMENT KOREA HERALD AND SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SHINMUN WARN THAT POSSIBILITY OF PYONGYANG MISCALCULATION HAS GROWN SINCE INDOCHINA DEBACLE AND VIEW KIM'S TRIP IN THIS LIGHT. THEY ALSO LINK VISIT TO REITERATION AT APRIL 17 MEETING OF ROK ARMY COMMANDERS OF ROKG STATEMENT THAT KOREA IS IN STATE OF WAR. TONGA ILBO VIEWS VISIT WITH LESS ALARM, EXPRESSING BELIEF THAT PRC WILL STEER KIM AWAY FROM MILITARY ADVENTURE WITH RISK IT ENTAILS OF PRC CONFRONTATION WITH US.

4. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY, ROKG OFFICIALS HAVE AGREED ONLY ON LACK OF INDICATIONS AS TO MEANING OF VISIT. RED CROSS VICE PRESIDENT YI POM-SOK TOLD POL COUNS THAT UNSPECIFIED GROUP OF OFFICIALS HAD DISCUSSED VISIT INCONCLUSIVELY FOR FOUR HOURS APRIL 17. YI SPECULATES KIM INITIATED THE TRIP TO PEKING IN ORDER TO FORESTALL ANY MOVES DETRIMENTAL TO PYONGYANG RESULTING FROM SCHEDULED VISIT BY PRESIDENT FORD TO PEKING. ON OTHER HAND, DR. YI YONG-HO OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION BOARD FEELS IT MAY HAVE BEEN PRC WHICH REQUESTED SUDDEN MEETING, EITHER TO PRE-EMPT USSR OR TO CAUTION KIM AGAINST AGGRAVATING SITUATION IN KOREA. MOFA IS ALSO UNSURE OF TRIP'S IMPLICATIONS BUT SEES IT IN LIGHT OF POST-INDOCHINA SINO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP.

5. COMMENT: WHATEVER VISIT IMPLIES FOR PRC-DPRK POSITION, ROKG WILL CERTAINLY USE IT AS FURTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR TIGHTENED SECURITY AT HOME. THIS IS ALREADY EVIDENT IN REMARKS AT COMMANDERS CONFERENCE AND FURTHER CALLS IN PRESS FOR NATIONAL UNITY. SNEIDER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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